



Protect Your Health

Exposure to floodwaters and contaminants can be a significant health risk. Understanding the risks and knowing how to respond will help you to recover from flooding as quickly and safely as possible.



Drinking Water

If you are unsure whether your drinking water supply has been contaminated, drink only boiled or bottled water until advised otherwise by health authorities or Council. Where necessary, ensure that boiled or bottled water is also used to wash raw food, make ice, brush your teeth, and for your pet's drinking water.

Food

The only items which are safe to eat after exposure to flood waters are sealed, tinned foods. Throw away all other food items which may have been exposed to flood waters.

Prior to using tinned foods, wash tins in hot soapy water then immerse in a solution containing $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cup of household laundry bleach and 5 litres of water. Leave tins immersed in the bleach solution for 2 minutes before rinsing in clean water. Don't forget to mark the tins before washing them so you know what's inside.

Garden Vegetables

Flood water can contaminate your garden and will make many vegetables unsafe to eat.

Leafy greens such as lettuce and spinach, as well as soft berries and herbs, are highly susceptible to contamination and should be discarded.

Beans, peas, tomatoes, zucchinis and root vegetables, such as carrots and potatoes, as well as produce with a tough outer shell, such as melons and oranges, can be eaten after soaking in a weak chlorine solution containing 2 tablespoons of household laundry bleach and 4 litres of water. Rinse the fruit and vegetables in clean water then peel. Cook vegetables thoroughly before eating.

If you are unsure about the safety of any produce, throw it out.

Hygiene

It is particularly important to practice good personal hygiene when dealing with mud or other materials which may have been contaminated by flood waters. Wash or sanitise your hands regularly, particularly before eating or drinking.

Cover all open wounds and change the dressing daily, checking for signs of infection. If your wound is deep, has been exposed to flood waters or develops redness, swelling or discharge, seek immediate medical attention.

Try to minimise your exposure to flood water and mud, particularly if you have diabetes or other chronic illnesses.

Mosquitoes

Mosquito numbers can rapidly increase after a flood, increasing your risk of mosquito-borne disease. Where possible, try to avoid being outside at dusk when mosquitoes are most active. Reapply a mosquito repellent every few hours, avoiding your eyes and mouth. Additional protection can be achieved through use of mosquito coils or by applying repellent directly to clothes (though this may stain clothing).

Mould

Care should be taken to minimise your exposure to mould as it can irritate your skin and respiratory system, particularly if you have asthma or allergies. Always wear rubber gloves and safety goggles with closed in sides when dealing with flood contaminated materials and consider the use of a N95/P2 disposable respirator mask.

Richmond
Valley
Council

